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THE BERNSTEIN PROVERB LIBRARY. Through attendance, in 1865, at a lecture on the wisdom of proverbs and their ethical and racial significance, Ignatius Bernstein, a rich citizen of Warsaw, was led to the idea of collecting a library of the proverbs of all ages and peoples, — books and manuscripts, independent works and articles from periodicals. Wealth enabling him to search and choose from all quarters of the globe, the library, after 35 years of industrious collection, is unique in the world. It contains 4761 separate items from more than 150 languages of civilized and uncivilized races and peoples, of which 70 are MS. A sumptuous catalogue of the Bernstein collection was published at Warsaw in two volumes in 1900. A copy has not yet reached the editor of the Journal, so this note is necessarily incomplete.

TOY EXHIBITION AT PARIS. Late in the summer of 1901 the Parisian prefect of police, M. Lépine, suggested to the makers of cheap toys, New Year's presents, etc., that they try to invent some new and original toys. The idea took, and a prize exhibition was instituted, in which 160 exhibitors shared. The exhibit was formally opened in the large hall of the Tribunal of Commerce in November, and the toys offered for competition numbered many hundreds. The value of the toys exhibited ranged from 5 centimes to fr. 2.95, the maximum price fixed by the authorities. Among the more interesting specimens were : a map that could be taken to pieces ("la terre en morceaux"); a Boer-English toy in which the Boer kicks the Briton; a whole collection of "Santos," or toy air-ships, some of which, by an ingenious device, circle round the Eiffel tower; a donkey that, when a bit of sugar is put into its mouth and the bridle pulled, returns it as a bonbon, — a new "nickel-in-the-slot" machine; a harp with flute attachment; an "alcoholic;" automobiles for from fr. 1.43 to fr. 1.95, the last being "elephant;" self-moving boats for two sous (run by chemical reaction), etc. M. Léo Claretie, one of the jury of awards, was very enthusiastic over the success of the affair, which proved abundantly that the old ingenuity of the Parisians was still alive, and that the toy-maker's funeral was not yet to be. As a result of the exhibition a toy-museum will probably be inaugurated. These few notes are taken from a brief account by Marie-Louise Néron in "*Volkskunde*" (vol. xiv., 1901-02, pp. 205-207).

A. F. C.

WELSH SUPERSTITIONS. Although not more superstitious or less intelligent than any other class of Americans, it seems to be a fact that those of Welsh descent possess a greater stock of "sayings" of one kind or another, and of folk-lore traditions and beliefs, than those of most other nationalities. Two superstitions that I have found to be nearly universal among Welsh Americans seem to me to be worthy of record.

One of these belongs to that large class of weather-wise observations, and is based on simple belief in an overruling Providence that permits not even a sparrow to fall unobserved.

The belief or superstition was first brought to my notice a number of

years ago. In the course of a conversation with an old Welsh coal miner late in the fall, he remarked that we had a long, hard winter before us, and that he was therefore sure of steady work at good wages until spring.

Struck by the absolute confidence of his tone, I inquired how he knew.

"Why," he replied, "look around you. See those weeds. Did you ever see taller? It is the same everywhere, — in the fields, in gardens, along the roadside, the weeds are higher than I ever remember seeing them before. That means that we will have the deepest snows the coming winter seen here for many years. The reason is this. The little snowbirds live on the seeds of weeds all winter. If the snow covered up the weeds the birds would starve; so the weeds always grow somewhat higher than the deepest snow will be. When the winter is to be soft and open, with little snow, the weeds only grow a few inches tall. I am an old man and I have never known this sign to fail."

It is pleasant to note that that winter, at least, the old coal miner's faith was justified. Since then I have proved that the same belief is prevalent among the Welsh in all sections of the country. I have even heard it referred to in the pulpit by Welsh clergymen as an instance of God's watchful care over his creatures.

Another superstition, of a less pleasing nature, but perhaps even more widespread, is the belief that if a wild bird flies into a house a member of the family will die within a year. A remarkable instance of the verification of this belief occurred within my own knowledge. It happened in one of the mining towns of Pennsylvania, one summer evening in 1898. The family were of Welsh extraction, saturated with the beliefs and superstitions of the mother country. The mother was of rather advanced age, in failing health, and inclined to worry over the prospect that her days on earth were nearly ended. One evening as they were about to sit down to supper a robin flew in at the open door. With a cry of terror the old lady threw up her hands and fell back dead.

Of course it is evident that the woman died of fright, inducing an attack of heart failure. If she had never heard that the entry of a bird into a house meant death to one of the inmates she would possibly be alive to-day. However, the occurrence did much to add to the prestige of the omen, not only among the Welsh, but among those of other nationalities in the same community.

This latter belief seems to be a survival of the pagan doctrine of the transmigration of souls. It is even now said in some sections that the bird comes to summon the soul of the one whose death is indicated, — and that after death the soul will enter that bird. This may be an explanation of the fact that even the children of Welsh parentage rarely make war upon members of the feathered tribe.

This superstition, however, can hardly be classed as of Welsh origin. It seems to be equally prevalent among the Scotch and Irish, and to a certain extent among the English. I can find no trace of it, however, among continental peoples.